



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

International human rights system

Human rights are codified in international agreements or treaties between governments, called conventions or covenants.

International human rights treaties provide an agreed set of human rights standards and establish mechanisms to monitor how a treaty is implemented. By ratifying a treaty, a country voluntarily accepts legal obligations under international law.

Australia is a party to 7 core international human rights treaties:

- [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#)
- [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(ICESCR\)](#)
- [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\)](#)
- [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)
- [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment \(CAT\)](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#).

[Human rights scrutiny](#) processes under the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011* assess the compatibility of legislation against these treaties.

Australia also has periodic [treaty body reporting](#) obligations under these treaties.

Australia is an active participant in the [Universal Periodic Review](#) process which provides an in-depth analysis of Australia's compliance with our international human rights obligations.

Australia maintains a standing invitation for all United Nations Special Rapporteurs and other Special Procedure Mandate Holders to visit Australia.

Special Procedure Mandate Holders are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective.

Visits present an opportunity to identify areas to improve and discuss best practice. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights maintains information about [country visits of UN Special Procedure Mandate Holders to Australia](#).

Australia is also a party to:

- the [Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) establishing a complaints mechanism
- the [Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty](#)
- the [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict](#)
- the [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child](#)

Prostitution and Child Pornography

- the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women establishing a complaints mechanism
- the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishing a complaints mechanism
- the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Australia is also a party to complaints mechanisms under the CAT and the CERD. For further information, see human rights communications.

The Australian Government also supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Persons as a non-legally binding document.